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INDIA

THE TRUTH

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A CONSIDERABLE portion of the material used in this book was included in a little volume entitled *Britain's Record in India*, written by the author and published in 1927. The present work contains new matter of great importance bearing on the present situation in India, and brings the record up to May 1930.

J. E. W.

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INDIA: THE TRUTH

INTRODUCTION

THE lawlessness which has been rampant in certain parts of India since Mr. Gandhi set out on his latest revolutionary campaign has directed the attention of the whole civilized world to the affairs of that great country. Still, there are comparatively few people, even in England, who possess an intelligent knowledge of the aims and achievements of the British in India, and it is perfectly obvious to any unprejudiced observer who possesses first-hand acquaintance with the economic, social, and political conditions under which the peoples of India live that a large section of the public here, and indeed a number of our politicians, have an entirely false conception of the Indian problem of to-day. .

The erroneous beliefs which exist are largely the outcome of persistent anti-British propaganda, which is characterized in the main by malice as well as by mendacity. This propaganda has been carried on for many years past. In India it has worked incalculable mischief. It has poisoned the minds of the youth of the

country; it has led to rioting, murder, and massacre, and to the deaths of thousands of Mr. Gandhi's fellow-countrymen.

This evil propaganda has not been confined to India. It has manifested itself in England, and it has been conducted with assiduity in the United States, with the object of embittering the relations between the Americans and the British.

It is, therefore, of importance to-day, in the interests both of India and of this country, to refute the allegations, incessantly made, that British rule in India has meant the impoverishment of the masses, that it has been solely inspired by selfish aims, that it has robbed the Indians of their liberty, and that it is perpetuating the economic and political subjection of the people.

No one can pretend that the British administration of India has achieved perfection. Like other human institutions, the Government of India has, at times, blundered and pursued mistaken policies. But it can be asserted and proved by overwhelming evidence that, notwithstanding errors and shortcomings on the part of British administrators, the presence of the British has been instrumental in securing India from external aggression, that it has brought justice and security to the people at large, that

it has raised India to a leading place among the great trading nations of the world, and that it has banished the terrible danger of famine which formerly brought disease and death to millions of the population.

The work of reconstruction and development in India has been repeatedly retarded within the past ten years by agitations which have been fruitful of evil and barren of good. In these movements Mr. Gandhi has played a leading part. His campaign to-day would be regarded as farcical in any Western country. But in India incitements to lawlessness camouflaged as "non-violent non-co-operation" or "passive resistance" have again and again been productive of outbreaks of disorder, in which the criminal classes have readily participated.

The cynic might well regard with a smile of derision the fact that the outrages in Bengal, the orgies of murderous ruffianism at Peshawar and Sholapur, and the grotesque performances of "salt manufacturers" in the Bombay Presidency and elsewhere, should be cited as reasons why the progress of Constitutional reform should be accelerated, and a fresh "gesture" of friendship be made by the British Government to "the Indian people."

The vast majority of the people of India have no concern with revolutionary agitation. They

regard with indifference or with direct hostility Mr. Gandhi's campaign, and they are unmoved by the preachings of the Communist agents, Indian and foreign, who have already inflicted serious injury on the country. There are in India 70 million Mahomedans, and Moslem leaders have openly condemned Mr. Gandhi and all his works. The President of the All-India Depressed Classes Conference, representing many millions of the victims of social oppression in India, moreover, declared at the session of that body held at Amraoti, this year: "We will not only denounce his (Mr. Gandhi's) movement, but will side with the Government for the maintenance of law and order." Mr. Gandhi was not going to suffer, he said, it would be the depressed classes who would have to bear all the miseries resulting from law-breaking. "The movement," he added, "will end by making us sink still deeper in the quagmire of untouchability."

The great majority of caste Hindus, again, have no sympathy with revolutionary movements.

A dispassionate examination of the facts, indeed, shows beyond dispute that it is the common people who have been in the main the sufferers from the "non-violent" campaigns which Mr. Gandhi has led, and in speaking in the Legislative Assembly in 1923 of the Mahatma's

political activities, Sir Malcolm Hailey, then Home Member of the Government of India, declared that Mr. Gandhi "has done more than any man in his generation to disturb the peace of India; he has done more to hamper its constitutional and political advance."

This statement was made in the course of a speech against a motion advocating the release of Mr. Gandhi after his conviction for sedition. Sir Malcolm reminded the Assembly that Mr. Gandhi had admitted his share of responsibility for the riots which had occurred in Bombay on the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Wales. In those riots between fifty and sixty people were killed and several hundred were injured. "It is impossible for me," said the Mahatma, "to dissociate myself from the mad outrages of Bombay. As a man of education, having a fair share of experience of the world, I should know the consequences of every one of my acts. I knew them. I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk, and if I were set free, I would still do the same." Again, referring to the barbarous massacre of policemen at Chauri Chaura in February 1922, Mr. Gandhi declared, "It is impossible to dissociate myself from the diabolical outrages of Chauri Chaura."

The Mahatma did not deny the charges on

which he was arraigned. "Yet," said Sir Malcolm Hailey, in a striking passage of his impressive speech, "I feel that before the bar of history, he will have to meet even graver charges than those for which he was indicted. I have said before that I do not attack his character; he may be a saint, or a visionary as you will; it may be that he was seeking no personal gain or material advantage from the agitation which he had organized. If you will, he was fanatical and misguided rather than a criminal in the ordinary sense. Nevertheless, history will undoubtedly hold him morally responsible for the results of his teaching, and deem him culpable for his share in leading an undisciplined and inflammable population into disorder. For myself, I wish to use no harsh words regarding his recent career; but with all the virtues he may possess, he appears to me to be a man avaricious of power and unconscionable in the means he adopts to attain his ends."

Undeterred by the terrible results of the subversive movements which he led in the years 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922, Mr. Gandhi, in 1930, once more inaugurated a revolutionary campaign.

The Mahatma again justified his revolutionary activities by vague, unsustained, and easily refutable charges against the Government. He

has never attempted to give an intelligible explanation of what he proposes to substitute for the present system of administration, which has raised India to a position she had never before occupied in recorded history, and is steadily pursuing a policy of economic development.

That there are millions of people in India who are poor is perfectly true, but their poverty cannot justly be laid at the door of the British. On the other hand, there is abundant evidence that the material condition of the masses has steadily improved, and the agricultural policy pursued by the Government, together with the progressive extension of the finest irrigation system in the world, must inevitably tend to add further to the wealth of the cultivators who constitute the vast majority of the population.

It is pertinent here to quote from an open letter addressed to Mr. Gandhi in March 1930, by the Rev. J. C. Blair, one of the oldest inhabitants of Gujarat, the scene of the Mahatma's recent "civil disobedience" campaign. Mr. Blair, writing with forty years' experience of the country, dealt with Mr. Gandhi's references, in his recent letter to the Viceroy, to the "dumb millions" on behalf of whom he invariably professes to speak. "I have lived among these 'dumb millions' for forty years," said Mr. Blair, "and looking back over those years and com-

paring the ryots' condition to-day with what it was then, I can honestly say that I find the village people in a much better condition now, both materially and physically, than they were in 1890 when I came to India. The cultivators are more industrious, more thrifty, more self-reliant and happier now than then. Even in years of scarcity the Government have taught them to be so self-reliant that the cultivators are usually able to tide over the difficult period by means of the supplies of grain and fodder accumulated in good years, with the help given them by the Government. I have found no discontent among the villagers. The rank and file of India's people, the 'dumb millions' whom you refer to, I have found as happy and contented and even prosperous as the ryots in other parts of the world, and I have travelled far."

Mr. Blair appealed to Mr. Gandhi to pause before embarking upon this "mad risk," as the Mahatma had himself described it, since his action could only bring suffering to the "dumb millions." This appeal, as we know, fell on deaf ears.

One of the most effective replies to the charge that British administration is the cause of Indian poverty is found in a chapter of the *Moral and Material Progress Report for 1922*, written by Mr. L. F. Rushbrook Williams and published by the Government of India.

"The theory that the Indian masses are ground down by the exactions of an extravagant Government," he wrote, "though a favourite theme of eloquence in the newspaper Press, will not hold water for a single instant in the face of facts. Despite the high salaries paid to her officials, India probably possesses at this moment the cheapest administration in the world. Non-official estimates, carefully compiled, put the average incidence of taxation, including industrial profits, at Rs. 6 (9s.) per head per annum. The actual demand of the State upon the land works out in most places at about 5 per cent. of the gross produce, a figure which may be compared with the corresponding average of 17 per cent. in the case of Japan." Mr. Rushbrook Williams then discussed the basic causes of poverty, and summed up the situation with accuracy when he declared the problem to be a gigantic one, with its roots in certain long-standing customs and deficiencies which themselves make for distress as the population increases, while resources are confined within traditional limits by hide-bound precedent.

A notable instance of the manner in which the levying of taxation is used by anti-British agitators as a weapon against the Government of India is provided by the duty on salt. The manufacture and control of this essential product

by Government ensure a supply of salt of good quality to the people, and there is no ground whatever for the allegation that the tax is an oppressive one. The taxation of salt was in operation before the coming of the British to India, and it has been estimated to involve a payment of about 1s. per annum per family, inclusive of the supply needed for the cultivators' cattle. Mr. Wedgwood Benn, replying to a question on the subject on May 19, 1930, stated that the incidence of the tax per head of the population per annum was 4d. to 4½d.

It is essential in considering economic conditions in India to avoid analogies between that country and Europe. The conditions are so dissimilar that comparisons are apt to be grossly misleading. A warning should also be given against the acceptance of estimates of the average income of the people. There are no reliable data to enable an estimate of any statistical value to be made for India as a whole, and writers who enlarge on this theme in their attacks on British administration invariably forget that the money income of a peasant cultivator, who lives in his own dwelling and subsists on the produce of his fields, is not a reliable and trustworthy index of his standard of living. The economic status of the Indian cultivator, judged by Western standards, may be low, but the idea that the Indian

countryside is peopled by miserable, emaciated specimens of humanity is absurd. I have visited many Indian villages, and can speak on this subject from personal experience. The Indian Army, moreover, is recruited from the peasantry, and those who came into contact with the Indian soldier in the Great War can testify to his physical stamina.

INDIA "STRUGGLING TO BE FREE"

THE causes of poverty in India will be dealt with later; we will first consider the Extremist allegation that "India is struggling to be free," and that her efforts to secure liberty are relentlessly thwarted by the British.

The truth is that India's political destinies lie in the hands of her own people. The preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919, which brought into being the present Central Legislature and the Provincial Councils, states the declared policy of Parliament to be the "progressive realization of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the Empire." It further lays down that the action of Parliament in such matters must be guided by the co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.

The inauguration of the new Constitution meant a great step towards the goal which the advocates of responsible government had set before them. Yet, at the very outset, Mr. Gandhi and his allies of the Congress sought to wreck the Reforms. Frantic efforts were made by the

"non-co-operators" to prevent candidates from coming forward for election to the new legislative bodies, and voters from exercising the franchise. Intimidation was freely resorted to, election meetings were broken up, candidates were threatened, and the religious sentiments of the people were appealed to in pursuance of the boycott.

These tactics, however, failed; the elections were duly held, and in only half a dozen cases out of 637 were candidates not forthcoming.

It was provided in the Government of India Act, 1919, that within ten years of the passing of that measure by Parliament a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the working of the Constitution embodied in the Act, and to report as to whether it was desirable to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government existing in India. The statutory date was anticipated, and the Simon Commission was constituted in 1927 for the purpose of carrying out this momentous task. The story of the attempts to boycott that body, in which some politicians hitherto classed as Moderates unhappily participated, is familiar to all who have given even cursory attention to Indian affairs. With a view to affording Indians an opportunity of taking part in the inquiry, Sir John Simon formulated a proposal

that a "joint free conference" should be constituted, comprising the members of the Commission and an equal number of members of the Indian Central Legislature, over which he himself would preside. This proposal was carried into effect; but the scheme was received with contempt by the men who are now preaching "independence" for India.

The same fate befell Lord Irwin's famous announcement, made on his return from England, towards the end of 1929.

In his statement, issued in India on October 31st, the Viceroy declared that, in view of the doubts expressed both in Great Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government in enacting the Statute of 1919, he was authorized, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, to state clearly that, in their judgment, it was implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as therein contemplated, was the attainment of Dominion status.

The declaration of 1917, it may be recalled, was made by the late Mr. E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, in the Coalition Government, on August 20th of that year. It stated definitely that: "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of

India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

Lord Irwin, on October 31st, further stated that when the Simon Commission and the Indian Central Committee associated with it had submitted their reports, and when His Majesty's Government had been able, in consultation with the Government of India, to consider these matters in the light of all the material then available, they would propose to invite representatives of different parties and interests in British India and representatives of the Indian States to meet them, separately or together as circumstances might demand, for the purpose of conference and discussion in regard both to British-Indian and all-Indian problems.

The announcement thus made aroused controversy in this country. In India, however, it had the effect of rallying to the side of the Government a number of Liberal politicians who had for the time being associated themselves with the more extreme element, and it was welcomed by leading representatives of the Indian States.

But Mr. Gandhi and his Congress associates

emphasized their indifference to the demonstration of good will made by the Viceroy and the British Government, and they were in no wise deterred from launching a campaign of lawlessness which, as every reader of the newspapers knows, has led to rioting and savage murder.

Mr. Gandhi, in attempting to justify his reckless proceedings, has asserted that if those who condemn his actions could realize the torture of the starving millions of India, the slow, lingering deaths brought about by forced starvation, "they would risk anarchy and worse to put an end to that agony which will not end until the existing rule and spoliation are ended." Now, every sane and unprejudiced observer who has direct acquaintance with India knows full well that the existing administration, so far from torturing and despoiling the masses of India, has consistently endeavoured to improve the material condition of the people, and that the success it has achieved has aroused the unstinted admiration of eminent foreign students of Indian problems.

The Government of India and His Majesty's Government, as we have seen, have consistently adhered to the pledge contained in the declaration of 1917. The non-official European community of India have also co-operated loyally in the endeavours to make the Reformed Constitution

a success. When the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was under consideration, the European Association, which represents the non-official community, strongly criticized certain features of the Scheme then put forward, and it has solid ground for its contention that much of its criticism has been amply justified by events. But once the new Act had been passed by Parliament, the accredited representatives of the community announced their determination to co-operate in working it, and they have faithfully followed that course. The Statement of Policy of the European Association to-day, moreover, explicitly sets forth that one of the aims kept prominently before the Council of that body is "the fostering of a relationship of cordiality and co-operation with those Indians who are working constructively for the good of India."

It is unquestionable that if the British in India were guilty of the conduct ascribed to them by their detractors, their position would long ago have been untenable. It would, indeed, be impossible to persuade any sane and unbiased man that a handful of British officials backed up by a small British Army could keep in cruel subjection a sub-continent with a population, including subjects of the Indian States, of 320,000,000, among whom are great martial races which proved their valour on the battle-

fields of France and Flanders, in Palestine, Mesopotamia, and other theatres of war. The strength of the British Army in India is less than 60,000; the British members of the Indian Civil Service number some 894 in all. There are vast areas in India where a British soldier is never seen; the great majority of the civil officials live unarmed in the districts, where their only sure protection lies in the good will and friendship of the people. /

Is it conceivable that if these men were the agents of a tyrannical despotism they could carry on duties affecting the daily lives of the masses with the immunity from danger which they enjoy? And is it credible that if the Government of India were guilty of the systematic oppression with which they are charged, eminent and high-minded Indians would consent to participate in the administration of the country? Three out of the seven members of the Governor-General's Executive Council are Indians, and in each Provincial Government there are included Indian Ministers entrusted with the care of Public Health, Education, Agriculture, and other activities of the State. The Indian Civil Service itself, which its detractors invariably treat as if it were purely British, has a substantial and increasing number of Indian members who loyally carry out their duties to their country. If there were substance

in the sweeping indictment recklessly framed by uninformed assailants of the Government these officers must be included in the charge. It is not so generally realized as it ought to be that the British element in the Services in India is steadily decreasing. In 1922 the Indian Civil Service comprised 1,179 Europeans and 208 Indians; by 1929 the number of European members had fallen to 894, and that of the Indians had risen to 367. The same process is going on in the other Services. The number of European officers of the Indian Police declined in the same period from 627 to 564, while the number of Indian officers rose from 66 to 128. In the Indian Medical Service, on the Civil side, the number of Indian officers has increased since 1925 by 50 per cent. to 87, while the number of British officers has fallen from 293 to 253.

BRITISH PROTECTION VALUED

The truth is that the bare suggestion of any serious intention on the part of England to leave India to her own devices would cause panic throughout the country. The unhappy communal differences which too often manifest themselves in insensate outbreaks of violence constitute one of the most serious problems of the India

of to-day. Enlightened Mahomedans and Hindus alike deplore the tension which exists between the followers of the two great religions. The suggestion that communal differences are fomented by British officials is as false as it is malicious. I can speak with first-hand knowledge of the constant anxiety caused to district officers by the potentialities of conflict which arise during the festivals of one religion or the other. The danger has reached such dimensions that the requisition of the services of troops on these occasions, in order to prevent bloodshed, is becoming more and more frequent. Many attempts are being made by leaders on both sides to compose these differences in the interests of India and of humanity, but so far the success achieved has been small. Meanwhile, the services of British soldiers in providing protection for the law-abiding in times of communal trouble have repeatedly been acknowledged by grateful Indians. 'The Somersets were entertained at Agra by Indian gentlemen after the riots in that city; and after the terrible Moplah rebellion, with its concomitants of massacre and unspeakable outrage, a British regiment was presented with a piece of plate by the Hindu community.'

Again, during the grave communal disorders in Rawalpindi, in 1926, ice and refreshments were gladly sent out to the troops by the Indian

inhabitants, and evidence was forthcoming that the owner of a house actually set fire to his verandah in order to make out a case for a British sentry to be posted near by. When the rioting ceased the authorities had great difficulty in removing the troops, as the people insisted that their presence was necessary to "restore confidence." Another striking instance of the importance attached by Indians to British protection was witnessed in Bengal. In the Calcutta riots of 1926, which resulted in many deaths owing to the violence of the mobs, it was found that the European element in the police force was the only section that inspired confidence, and the demand that sergeants should be posted in quarters where feeling ran high was insistent. The number of these officers was, however, small, and as a result of the experience recorded it was decided that the European element in the police force should be substantially augmented.

In the Delhi riots of 1924 the Superintendent of Police reported that wherever a picket of British infantry was posted neither party dared to assault the other; respectable men and women felt safe as soon as the British soldier arrived. Law-abiding people in India, who constitute an overwhelming majority of the population, have, indeed, reason to be grateful for the protection which they enjoy under the existing *régime*,

both from troublers of the peace within and potential invaders across their borders.

The expenditure on defence is a subject of continual criticism by the opponents of the Government of India. Men's memories are proverbially short, and it is forgotten by many that as recently as 1919 it was necessary, in order to meet the Afghan attack, to employ a force of 340,000 across the Indus on a front of 1,000 miles. There were in India at that time a considerable number of British troops who had been fighting in Mesopotamia and were anxiously waiting demobilization so that they might return to their homes in England. These men had every reason and right to look to an early release from military service, and it was with great reluctance, as he said, that Sir Charles Monro, then Commander-in-Chief in India, sanctioned their retention.

His confidence in the loyalty of the British soldier was not misplaced, and Sir Charles subsequently paid a fine tribute to the spirit the troops displayed in shouldering this additional burden. The climatic conditions under which this campaign was conducted were appalling. The Afghan attack was commenced during the hottest season of the year, and shortly after the outbreak of hostilities a heat-wave of cruel severity swept over North-West India, the daily shade temperatures registered at Peshawar in

May, June, and July ranging from 5° to 7° F. above the daily average of the previous twenty years. Some idea of the alarm which was occasioned by the attempted invasion of India may be gathered from the fact that a leading Extremist journal in Bengal called for a cessation of all agitation and urged its readers to give their whole-hearted support to the Government, in order to avert a danger which might affect the happiness of generations of Indians yet unborn. It is almost incredible that during Mr. Gandhi's latest campaign an attempt should have been made by his disciples to create serious trouble on the Frontier. Nothing, indeed, could more strikingly illustrate the wanton indifference of these men to the welfare of their fellow-countrymen and to the safety of their lives and property.

The necessity of providing for the protection of the North-West border is an urgent problem to-day. "The road to London is through Kabul and India," declared Lenin, and the penetration of Central Asia by the Bolsheviks, attended by ruthless massacre, has synchronized with their efforts to foment revolution in India itself. In their judgment, dismissing the appeal of the revolutionaries who had been sentenced in Cawnpore in 1924, the Allahabad High Court described the methods which had been commended to the convicted men. "Violence and

destruction of property were to be encouraged and conflicts to be precipitated. At the propitious moment resources and armed help were to come from 'the Universal Revolutionary Party,' that is, the Communist International." The conspirators, as the High Court pointed out, had overlooked the strength that would be arrayed against an enemy bent on the destruction of the upper and middle classes, Indian and British alike. But there was no mistake as to the object of the instigators of the revolutionary plot. "In the event of the overthrow by force of the British Government, the revolutionaries proposed to sweep away all Indian political groups and labour organizations which did not come into line. The power of upper- and middle-class Indians was to be destroyed by taking from them all that they possessed."

It is significant that, according to a statement made by Sir Maneckjee Dadabhoy in April 1930, the recent outbreaks of lawlessness were not entirely due to Mr. Gandhi's propaganda of "civil disobedience," but were partially attributable to the fact that anarchists and Communists had taken the opportunity offered by his campaign to revive a revolutionary movement which had been lying dormant. Sir Maneckjee, who is a Member of the Council of State and an eminent figure in public life in India, declared that these

outbreaks were extensively fomented, supported and subsidized from foreign sources.

The military expenditure provided for in the Indian Budget of the current year is in round figures £40,500,000. No unbiased critic can declare that sum to be excessive for the maintenance of internal peace and the external defence of a great country with land frontiers of enormous extent, which, if inadequately guarded, would render it liable to danger from invasion. The warlike tribes of the North-West border include 120,000 fighting men armed with modern rifles, and bitter experience has shown that the organization and equipment of this formidable force has improved immeasurably during recent years.

THE ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY

THE economic position of the cultivating classes is obviously of supreme importance to the welfare of India. The population of the country as shown by the Census of 1921 amounts to nearly 320,000,000, of whom 72,000,000 are subjects of Indian States. Of this mass of humanity 229,000,000 are dependent on agriculture. It is true that many of the cultivators are poor; it is false to say that their poverty can be laid at the door of the Government. An independent authority, Mr. Stanley Jones, the author of that arresting book, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, has accurately epitomized the fundamental difficulties which lie in the way of economic progress. Mr. Jones is an American missionary, a warm admirer of Mr. Gandhi, and an advocate of self-government for India. He has laboured long in that country and has many friends among the people. "Our industrial schools, our experimental farms, our co-operative banks, and numerous endeavours at economic uplift," he writes, "prove that we are keenly alive to the need of helping India to get bread. But a great unbiased economist came to the conclusion that 'almost every economic ill

in India is rooted in religion and social custom.' Every time you try to lift India economically you run into a custom that baulks you."

Religious and social customs deeply ingrained in the people, an inordinate love of litigation, indebtedness to money-lenders, often due to borrowing for ceremonial purposes, and the "fragmentation" of holdings, arising from ancient laws of inheritance, are the primary causes of poverty in India. Expenditure on a marriage festival will frequently amount to more than the whole income of the family for a year. The loss to the cultivating classes through the ravages of wild animals and birds is incalculable. Monkeys, the peacock and his harem, wild pigs and pigeons destroy a considerable proportion of the crops, and the religious objection of the Hindu to the taking of life secures for these marauders an immunity found in no other part of the world. The black rat is not only the source of plague, but consumes, on a very conservative estimate, grain to the value of £12,000,000 annually. The highest authorities on plague declare that this scourge could be eliminated if the people at large could be induced to join whole-heartedly in a determined and sustained campaign against the rat. The monkey and the peafowl enjoy special consideration on religious grounds.

The veneration in which the cow is held by Hindus constitutes another obstacle to agricultural prosperity. Owing to this sentiment the destruction of useless animals is impossible, and it is estimated by agricultural authorities that at least 14,000,000 of the cattle in India are of no economic value whatever. The life of these animals is taken as six years, and during that period they each consume fodder to the value of over £7.

The "fragmentation" of holdings means that a cultivator may own a small farm divided up into minute strips at a considerable distance from each other. The origin of the evil lies in the laws of inheritance, which lead to the distribution of the land among the sons of a family on the death of its head. It is not unusual to find a cultivator with his land situated in twenty or thirty different places; a case is indeed on record where a peasant proprietor's holding was distributed over 200 fields. The consequence of this is that the fields sometimes become so narrow as the process of subdivision goes on that they cannot be ploughed crossways, or so small that they cease to be cultivated.

An examination of conditions in the Punjab throws a flood of light on the problem of poverty. Thanks to irrigation and the extension of railways, the Punjab to-day is the most prosperous

agricultural Province of India. But many of the people are still poor, although the successful efforts of Government to provide them with water for their land and means of transport for their produce have brought wealth to the Province. The Punjab peasant has been described by a recent Governor, Sir Edward Maclagan, as one of the finest and noblest of his kind. He is the backbone of the Indian Army, and he has inspired British officials with admiration for his manly qualities. Yet his improvidence renders him an easy prey to the wiles of the money-lender; his love of litigation enriches the legal profession and its hangers-on and deprives him of a large proportion of the fruits of his labour. It has been well said by a British official who has spent years of service among the peasantry that "the tide of wealth which has been flowing into the Punjab for the last thirty years passes through the hands of the many who have earned it by their toil into the hands of the few who acquire and retain it by their wits."

The Punjab has been fortunate in that its economic life has been studied at first hand and admirably described by Mr. Hubert Calvert, who was a member of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, which was presided over by the Marquis of Linlithgow. Mr. Calvert is an Indian Civilian who has been instrumental to a

large degree in extending the co-operative system in the Province. His work has been a labour of love, and while doing his utmost to raise the economic status of the people he has in his book, *The Wealth and Welfare of the Punjab*, faithfully and sympathetically exposed the causes which retard their progress. A common charge against British administration is that it levies an excessive toll on the cultivator by means of its land revenue. The accusation has no substance in fact, and conditions in the Punjab, which owes the great accession of wealth it enjoys almost entirely to the action of the Government, provide an eloquent commentary on the allegations so freely made. The high price of land, due to the provision of railways and irrigation, has given the cultivator "the curse of easy credit." He maintains over 40,000 money-lenders, an army of 32,000 goldsmiths, and a horde of beggars. The land revenue is about 4 crores of rupees (a crore is equal to £750,000), the interest paid to money-lenders is about 12 crores; litigation costs 4 crores, and preventable mortality among cattle yet another 4 crores.

The passion of the people for the excitement involved in a lawsuit is almost incredible. Colonel Roe, describing his experience as a District and Sessions Judge in the Punjab, wrote: "The average litigant in India is quite unlike the

average litigant in England. There a man only goes to law if he is compelled to, whereas in India, at any rate so far as the agricultural community is concerned, a man goes to law because he likes to have a lawsuit, which provides him with an interest in life for the time being, and very often enables him to avenge himself on an enemy. It may also result in pecuniary advantage to himself." The consequences are disastrous to the people. A conservative estimate places the number of persons involved in litigation in the Punjab in an average year at 1,500,000, and the loss of time involved, including that of a million witnesses, at 10,000,000 days annually. The capitalized value of the annual expenditure is estimated to be sufficient to redeem the whole mortgage debt of the Province.

The legal profession has grown and prospered owing to the fatal propensity of the people to resort to the courts. In 1868 there were forty lawyers in the Punjab, and in 1896, 360; to-day their numbers have risen to 1,200.

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE FOR AGRICULTURE

It is obvious that no civilized administration could fail to concern itself incessantly with remedies for such evils as have been described. That the British rulers of India, like the rulers of every other country, have made mistakes is unquestionable. But their efforts to improve the lot of the agricultural masses are characterized by honesty of purpose, and the results afford encouragement to all who are anxious for India's prosperity. While, as we have seen, the welfare of agriculture means the welfare of India, the administrators of the country have had to face exceptional difficulties in carrying out their task. Thorold Rogers and other economists have paid tributes to the services rendered to British agriculture by many enlightened landowners. On the other hand, Indian landowners have done little to advance the interests of the greatest Indian industry, and the educated classes, with few exceptions, take only a perfunctory interest in agriculture. The foremost critics of the Government of India, moreover, are townsmen who display an abysmal ignorance of the problems of the cultivator.

When the present Viceroy foreshadowed an intensive agricultural policy, the leader of the Swarajist party's comment was: "The new Viceroy was about to come out with some agricultural scheme and divert their attention from the real object." Sir Mahomed Habibullah, a Member of the Government of India, delivered a speech on the same subject, whereupon a newspaper generally regarded as the mouthpiece of a leading Indian politician ridiculed the idea that the policy announced would be of direct benefit to India, and it added: "It could not be pretended that the expenditure on agricultural improvement had been anything but a dreadful waste." Yet anyone possessing even an elementary acquaintance with the work of the Agricultural Departments knows full well that the comparatively small amount of money expended on these Departments has given almost miraculous results. The one criticism that might be levelled against the Government is that the financial resources which they have supplied have been inadequate. Agriculture is now committed to the charge of Indian Ministers in the various Provinces; but long before the Reforms were heard of, the Imperial Institute of Agriculture at Pusa and the Agricultural Departments of the Provincial Administrations had added materially to the wealth of the people. The obstacles they

had to surmount were formidable. The Indian agriculturist is far from being hopelessly conservative where farming is concerned. He is willing to adopt new methods when it has been proved to him that his interests lie in following that course. But in order to convince him it is necessary to give him practical demonstration of the value of the changes commended to his notice, and the scientists brought into the country by the Government have lived among the peasantry and worked assiduously to persuade them of the efficacy of the new methods.

In his *Review of Agricultural Operations for 1927-28*, Dr. Clouston, then Agricultural Adviser to the Government of India, stated that at the close of that year the area under improved crops as shown by Departmental returns was 10,000,000 acres, and since expansion at the rate of one million acres per annum has been proceeding for some years past, the total must now be over 12,000,000 acres. Crop improvement constitutes only one branch of the activities of the Agricultural Departments, yet this alone has added at least £10,000,000 annually to the income of the cultivators, while the cost of the Departments is under a million sterling per annum. The Royal Commission on Agriculture in India pointed out that official figures fail to do justice to the work on crop improvement

which has been carried out by the Departments, as the selected varieties of certain crops, such as wheat and cotton, are so generally grown in some Provinces that Departmental statistics are no longer a true representation of the case. It is, moreover, recognized that the estimate of the value of increased yields given by the Agricultural Adviser is a very conservative one. In a recent year 2,348,000 acres were sown with improved varieties of cotton. Half a million acres of this area were situated in the Bombay Presidency, where the new varieties gave an increased return of Rs. 15 per acre on quality alone. In the Punjab there were 600,000 acres under American cotton, which brought additional revenue to the grower of well on towards £2,000,000. In Madras the introduction of Cambodia cotton enabled the ryot to secure from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 per acre from land which formerly yielded from Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 per acre. The increased value of the crop from 1,400,000 acres of wheat of improved varieties was estimated at Rs. 20 per acre, giving a total equivalent to more than £2,000,000. Even greater benefits are promised by the new types of sugar-cane that have been introduced.

The activities of the Agricultural Departments embrace many other subjects, notably the improvement of the breeds of cattle, the protection of plants from insect pests and of animals from

disease; the provision of new fertilizers, of more efficient implements for tilling the soil, and of new types of wells and water-lifts. Some idea of the importance of the work of the scientific entomologists may be gathered from the estimate that damage to the extent of £135,000,000 annually is done to the crops by insect pests.

In their efforts to improve the breeds of cattle the Departments have met with many difficulties. The inferiority of the ordinary Indian indigenous bovine animals reacts prejudicially on the public health, owing to the smallness of the milk yield of the cow, and it is a notorious drawback to agricultural prosperity. The Hindu veneration for the cow, which has already been mentioned, constitutes an obstacle to the extirpation of bovine diseases, and prolongs the existence of animals which, while worthless in the economic sense, consume fodder urgently needed for useful cattle. In their work of improving the breeds the Agricultural Departments have sought to produce stronger animals for ploughing the fields and other farming operations, and cows giving higher yields of milk than have hitherto been known in India. The success achieved is calculated in the course of time materially to enhance the prosperity of the country and to provide a sufficient supply of milk to meet the requirements of the population. While the average yield of an

Indian cow during the lactation period is about 800 lb., there have been produced at Pusa, by selective breeding, cows giving five times that quantity, and by the introduction of Ayrshire bulls, animals which yield as much as 12,000 lb. As there are over 150,000,000 of cattle in British India, it is not difficult to imagine the enormous potentialities that lie in the substitution of valuable stock for the inferior animals now in use.

The brief outline given here of the results obtained by the Agricultural Departments will suffice to dispose of the suggestion that agricultural interests are entirely neglected by Government, and that money expended in the operations has been "a dreadful waste."

DEFEATING THE USURER

The co-operative movement, which owes its inception to the British administration, contains the germ of economic salvation for the Indian people. More than twenty years ago Sir Frederick Nicholson, after an investigation on behalf of the Madras Government of the results of co-operation in European countries, presented a report in which he advocated the introduction of co-operative credit societies in India. In Northern India other British officers, including

Sir Edward Maclagan and Mr. Dupernex, were moving in the same direction. The outcome of their proposals was the enactment of legislation to give practical effect to the project, and notwithstanding the hostility of the village money-lender, the movement has spread with marvellous rapidity. The village usurer often charged 40 per cent. for his advances; he mulcted his victims in compound interest, and by means of false accounts added to his own gains and to the poverty of the peasantry. He was ready to thrust loans upon cultivators whose land was now acquiring a high value owing to the action of an enlightened Government, the result being to encourage extravagance and improvidence among a population notoriously thriftless in their habits.

The credit society, consisting of the villagers themselves, is able to provide the cultivator with the finance he actually needs at a fair rate of interest, and at the same time to check extravagant and improvident habits among its members. The moral as well as the material effects of the system have been astonishing. Drunkenness in many cases has led to the disgrace of expulsion from the society; co-operation has given the villager a new outlook on life, has created an interest in education and in sanitation, and has proved a stimulus to habits of thrift and industry

which are of incalculable value. The story of the progress of co-operative credit in rural India may truthfully be said to constitute one of the most fascinating pages in the annals of the people. It has in some Provinces aroused the peasantry to a recognition of the extravagance involved in reckless litigation, and led to the substitution of local arbitration for recourse to the courts; its activities extend over a wide field both in the rural areas and in the towns. There are societies which sell agricultural machinery and implements, others which purchase and distribute seed on a co-operative basis, others which still concern themselves with cattle-breeding.

The cotton sale societies in the Bombay Presidency carry on business on a substantial scale, and the movement has been so successful there that it has spread to the neighbouring State of Baroda. Co-operation, again, has rendered possible a beginning of the voluntary process of consolidating the "fragmented" holdings which constitute so serious a stumbling-block to rural prosperity. In 1912 the number of registered co-operative societies in existence was 8,000. To-day it is estimated by Mr. C. F. Strickland, a former member of the Indian Civil Service, who has done notable work for co-operation in the Punjab, that there are 110,000 co-operative societies of all kinds in British India and in the

nine Indian States which submit returns for inclusion in the Government of India's report. "A membership of $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions and a working capital of about £75,000,000," Mr. Strickland remarks, "are only the first-fruits of a harvest which will cover the land." The task of creating this vast network of beneficent organizations has been attended with the difficulties inherent in dealing with a primitive agricultural population. But the abuses which crept in, largely owing to the inexperience of the people, are being eliminated, and the villager who has become a member of a co-operative society is inspired with new hope and faith, and is ready to participate in economic and moral projects which had no meaning for him in the days of his servitude to the money-lender.

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HOW FAMINE HAS BEEN FOUGHT

A PART from the disabilities under which, owing to the operation of deep-rooted social and religious customs, the masses of India labour, they have from time immemorial been subject to the grave economic evils resulting from the vagaries of the monsoon rains. The terrible famines with which the country was formerly afflicted arose mainly from drought or excessive rainfall, either of which inevitably caused a failure of the crops. The ravages of hordes of rats and other animal pests often added to the misery of the people, and before the British established peace throughout India, marauding armies or bands of freebooters inflicted untold misery upon the peasantry, akin to that which has to be endured by the Chinese people to-day.

Contemporary writers have given vivid descriptions of the horrors of the famines with which India was visited in the seventeenth century. As a result of the suffering caused by the great famine of 1630-31 whole families took poison as a means of escape from a life that had become unbearable; men were afraid to go out into the roads lest they should be murdered and eaten. The drought was followed by a plague of locusts,

rats, mice, and other vermin, which devoured everything that lay in their way. The troubles of the unhappy people were too often accentuated by the presence of rival armies, which barred the way to the bringing in of grain for their relief.

The establishment of internal peace helped to mitigate the evils described. But the dangers of drought and floods remained. It might be imagined from the diatribes of reckless critics that the British have tacitly acquiesced in the misery created by drought, or have, at all events, failed to adopt effective remedial measures to mitigate it. The reports of the various Famine Commissions show that nothing could be farther from the truth.

There has been no attempt to conceal the suffering attendant on the failure of the rains, while, on the other hand, successive Famine Commissions have anxiously sought to learn from the experience of the past and to devise measures for the protection of the cultivators. That famine has been the means of causing great mortality in the past none would attempt to deny. But highly coloured descriptions of the evils arising from failures of the crops in the nineteenth century continue to be repeated *ad nauseam* by writers whose sole aim is to discredit British administration. What, it might legitimately be asked, would be the condition of Great Britain if for a period

of six months the industries upon which the nation depends for its existence were to come to an absolute standstill? That is the problem with which India has repeatedly been faced, not through the malevolence of its administrators, but owing to vagaries of Nature which are beyond the control of man.

The activities of the Agricultural Departments and the creation of co-operative societies, which have already been discussed, have helped to strengthen the resistance of the people to famine. But the two most effective instruments in providing protection against the consequences of drought or floods have been the creation of a railway system and the provision of the finest irrigation works in the world. Before railways existed there might be a crop failure in one part of India and a bountiful harvest in another. The absence of means of transport rendered it impossible to bring food from the areas in which it existed in abundance to the districts in which the crops had entirely failed. That factor has been removed by the construction of railways, which has, moreover, enabled the cultivator in periods when crops are normal to find profitable markets for his surplus produce.

There is room for additional railway lines in India, and construction is still being carried on. But to-day, notwithstanding the delays which

have occurred from time to time in embarking on fresh projects, India possesses a railway system of 40,000 miles, constructed at a cost of well on towards £600,000,000. The rates and fares in operation are believed to be the lowest in the world, and the fact that in a single year over 620,000,000 passengers are carried is proof of the readiness with which the people avail themselves of the facilities provided.

The benefits conferred upon India by modern irrigation works and railways are recognized even by hostile English politicians. Yet one of these critics has the temerity to assert that: "The monetary and materialistic interests—the basest interests of mankind—of the British bureaucracy and of capitalism, united them in a common policy of political and economic subjection of the people of India." Without British capital India would still be at the mercy of famine; it is the British connection that has enabled her to borrow money on almost equal terms with the British Government.

THE BLESSINGS OF IRRIGATION

THE great canal irrigation works constructed by British and Indian engineers are at once a source of profit to the cultivators whose fields are supplied with water and to the general Indian taxpayer. Before these works were constructed irrigation was provided by means of wells, reservoirs, and inundation canals. But there was nothing in the shape of controlled irrigation, and nearly 90 per cent. of the cultivable area of the country was wholly dependent on an uncertain rainfall.

The work of engineers on irrigation was commenced more than a century ago. In 1866 the policy of obtaining Government loans for this purpose was inaugurated; since that period remarkable progress has been made. In the Punjab great desert wastes have been converted into fertile land and the Province has been freed from the peril of famine. In the course of fifty years an increase of over 7,500,000 acres was recorded in the area irrigated by canals in the Punjab, and the crops secured by the provision of water through their agency was estimated in 1919 at over £40,000,000. The Punjab Canal Colonies alone cover an area of some 5,000,000

acres, and the annual value of their crops is £20,000,000 in all. Owing to the extension of irrigation the value of the wheat exported from the Punjab increased in the course of forty years from £30,000 to over £10,000,000, and the Province is now among the great wheat-growing areas of the world.

There is no part of India in which canal irrigation is possible that has not benefited from the engineering works that have been constructed, and it is estimated by a competent authority that when the whole of the projects now in hand or in course of preparation are completed the actual area under irrigation in each year will be nearly equal to the area of Great Britain. The most notable scheme in hand includes a great barrage, 4,720 feet in length, across the Indus at Sukkur in Sind, which will command an area of 7,500,000 acres, and provide water in each year to a tract of country, now largely barren waste, equal in extent to the cultivable area of Egypt.

Yet with all the facts that have been cited open to the world, it is still alleged that Britain is holding India simply for the purpose of cruel extortion.

An effective reply to the reckless statements written about famine is found in the fact that, although during the past twenty years the country has been visited with two of the most severe

droughts ever recorded, the number of deaths from want of food have been almost *nil*.

SECURITY AGAINST FAMINE ESTABLISHED

During the years 1907 and 1908 the failure of the rains in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh tested alike the efficacy of the measures concerted to deal with such an emergency and the power of the people to withstand the consequences of the failure of their crops. The United Provinces cover an area of over 107,000 square miles; and at the Census of 1901 contained a population of 47,691,000, apart from the two small Indian States of Tehri and Rampur, the area of which is 5,089 square miles and the population 802,097. The whole of this great territory was affected more or less seriously by crop failure, and relief operations were found necessary over an area of 66,000 square miles, containing a population of nearly 30,000,000.

After the troubles had been successfully surmounted, Sir John Hewett, then Lieutenant-Governor, wrote an exhaustive and lucid review of the measures that had been taken for the relief of distress. It is inevitable in a year of drought that the water supply should be rendered more liable to contamination, and epidemic diseases are likely

to be more rife than in normal times. No doubt, moreover, as Sir John Hewett pointed out, in periods of scarcity people eat what they avoid in other circumstances, and consequently many deaths occur from diarrhoea and dysentery. The Lieutenant-Governor, however, declared that "eleven deaths only, or about a quarter of the number reported due to this cause in London last year, were recorded, which, after full inquiry, could be attributed directly to want of food. There was no inclination to conceal deaths due to starvation, and the fact that so few deaths occurred is an eloquent testimony to the adequacy of the relief measures." After paying a tribute to the officials and the non-official helpers whose efforts contributed to the success of the relief operations, Sir John Hewett affirmed that those on whose behalf the work of relief was undertaken were reported on all sides to be most grateful to the Government for the help that had been given them. Their expression of this feeling had, he said, probably been more articulate than on previous occasions, and opinion was unanimous that people were not only grateful but also contented. The general verdict was that the trial through which the Province had passed had served to bring all classes into closer sympathy with each other and with the Government.

A far more widespread failure of the monsoon rains was experienced in 1918-19. Not a Province in India remained unscathed, and the trouble synchronized with a period of abnormally high prices, largely due to the effects of the war. So great was the shortage of rain that the consequent loss of foodstuffs was estimated at no less than 20,000,000 tons, and the price of grain soared to a level never before experienced. The Government resorted to vigorous measures in order to meet the situation, including the *importation from Australia of 200,000 tons of wheat*. This action had a steadying effect on the price of the cereal and helped to restore public confidence. Meanwhile, owing to the high world-price of raw cotton, the cost of their clothing to the poorer classes became a serious problem. Steps were accordingly taken to manufacture standardized cloth which could be sold at a low figure, and this too had beneficial results. What emerged from the experience of that trying period was that even in the areas where the rise in prices was most acutely felt, the agricultural population showed powers of resistance never before experienced. Distress, even in backward areas, never became critical, and the maximum number of people on famine relief at any one stage of the shortage was under 600,000, or one-tenth of the number similarly placed through the crop

failure of 1900. India can never be assured of good monsoon rains, but her people may now regard the evil of drought with a sense of security hitherto unknown in the history of the country.

THE "UNTOUCHABLES" AND SWARAJ

SOCIAL reformers in India have long deplored the terrible disabilities imposed by the caste system on many millions of their fellow-countrymen. This is a question that anti-British writers generally avoid, or, if they refer to it at all, suggest some fatuous remedy for the evils that arise from it. Others declare that class distinctions prevail in every country, and that the implications of caste are found in England as well as in India. This is a mere travesty of the case.

An eminent Indian, Sir M. Visvesvaraya, K.C.I.E., late Dewan of Mysore, lucidly epitomized the position when he wrote: "Social distinctions exist in every country—distinctions based on wealth, birth, or occupation. No country outside India has, however, a social system which cuts at the very root of human brotherhood, condemns millions of persons to perpetual degradation, makes people hyper-exclusive, magnifies religious differences, and disorganizes society."

The "depressed classes" or "untouchables" suffer most severely in Southern India, though the devoted labours of Christian missionaries have helped to raise many of them to a higher

level of citizenship. In recent years, moreover, they have sought themselves to gain the elementary rights of humanity, which are denied them, not by members of an alien race, but by their own fellow-countymen. The efforts of Government have to some extent been successful in raising the status of the depressed classes by insisting on their children having access to public schools, and saving them from cruel economic oppression. But no Government can prevent one man, from regarding the very presence of another as constituting pollution, or looking upon him as outside the pale of humanity.

A highly interesting incident bearing upon this subject occurred during the Prince of Wales's visit. While the Prince was at Delhi there was being held in that city an "All-Indian Conference of the Depressed Classes," which was attended by thousands of delegates. The reply of the Prince to a loyal address of welcome from the Conference so delighted the outcastes that they sent representatives to present an address personally to His Royal Highness, this address concluding by requesting him "to convey to His Imperial Majesty our message that there are in India 60,000,000 of human beings who are untouchables, and that these should be raised if India is to be made fit for Swaraj."

In the Census Report of 1911 twenty-two castes

or tribes in the Province of Bihar and Orissa, comprising 8,250,000 persons, were recorded as "causing pollution by coming within a certain distance," and at the following enumeration in 1921 it was stated that not less than one-quarter of the whole population of 34,000,000 consisted of "untouchables."

A POIGNANT NARRATIVE

It is in Southern India, as has already been stated, that the treatment of the "untouchables" assumes its worst form. A special officer of the Madras Government is entrusted with the duty of protecting the interests of these unhappy people and improving their educational and economic status, and this gentleman has placed on record a poignant narrative of their unhappy condition. It was found that in no less than six districts of the Province more than one person in every five was theoretically not allowed to come within a distance of 64 feet of the higher castes without causing pollution. The public water supply was forbidden in nearly every village to castes which numbered one-sixth of the population. An English visitor, "a pronounced nationalist," while driving through a municipal town with an Indian student, was surprised at a request from the latter that he might be permitted

to get out and walk and rejoin the Englishman later on. The visitor's surprise was intensified when he discovered that the student's reason for descending was that, owing to caste prejudices, he was not allowed to pass through a certain street.

The economic evils suffered by the Panchamas, as they are known in the Madras Presidency, are deplorable. The special officer discovered that in many parts of Tanjore and in other districts the Panchama, whether farmer or labourer, was continually a loser in buying the necessaries of life and in disposing of his produce, owing to his inability to enter a shop or even to pass through the streets where the ordinary shopkeeper lived. Many of the hamlets inhabited by Panchamas were cut off from access to the main village or the road except at the good will of the owners of the field they must traverse. That conditions are improving is beyond doubt, and the people concerned have shown by their own action a determination that their servitude shall not be perpetuated.

Those who are ready to settle the future of India with a rhetorical phrase, or the stroke of a politician's pen, may be reminded of the evidence given before the Lee Commission by representatives of the outcastes in Madras and Bengal. The Madras witnesses declared that the improvement

in their position as a community had been mainly due to the British Government and the European services, and they feared that if those services were reduced they might lose what they had already gained. The representatives of these classes in Bengal also expressed apprehension as to their future, and urged that every step taken towards responsible government should "be accompanied by every conceivable caution."

THE PROBLEM OF INDUSTRIAL LABOUR

THE conditions of labour in industrial work in India have been the subject of considerable discussion of late, and trade union delegates from England have visited the leading centres of the textile industries in order to investigate the position for themselves. Of greater importance than any private investigation could be is the inquiry now being conducted by the Royal Commission on Labour under the chairmanship of the Right Honourable J. H. Whitley, late Speaker of the House of Commons. The report of the Commission should throw valuable light on many difficult problems, and it will be awaited with intense interest by all who desire that the status of Indian industrial labour should be improved. Meanwhile, adverse criticism mainly centres itself on Bombay, where a great cotton industry owes its existence to the enterprise of Indian capitalists. The wages of the individual operative here are very low, judged by British standards, but, on the other hand, it is only fair to the Indian employer to remember that the efficiency of labour is also low, so that in practice its actual cost is high. In the report on their investigations in India on behalf of the United Textile Factory

Workers' Association, Mr. James Hindle, J.P., and Mr. M. Brothers, of Blackburn, stated that the number of operatives per loom or spindle employed in India is four times as great as that considered necessary in Lancashire. The Indian textile operative, said these two trade union representatives, lacks the skill, the stability, and stamina of our workpeople. The textile mills, they went on to state, have a sixty hours' statutory working week of ten hours per day, but the operative is not engaged continuously, time being allowed for prayers, bathing, and smoking. It was questionable if more than eight hours' productive labour was obtained from the individual operative.

It is noteworthy, moreover, in view of the charges so often levelled against European employers, that Mr. Hindle on his return from India stated: "Wherever we saw industry organized or managed by European firms, there we saw both native labour and housing conditions under better circumstances than in almost any district where labour is run by native employers." The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in Madras, which are under European control, have long enjoyed a high reputation for the care they bestow on the welfare of their operatives. Of great interest again is an account issued in pamphlet form of the welfare work of the British

India Corporation, which comprises a number of important mills at Cawnpore under European control, and a mill in the Punjab. The work, the directors wrote, represents "a frank and practical recognition of our responsibility for the welfare of the many thousands of people who co-operate in the productive activities of this Corporation." Over 6,000 of the employees and their families are housed in the dwellings erected by the Corporation, the rents paid ranging from 1s. 8d. a month for single quarters to £1 5s. for small bungalows. Quarters are maintained in full repair and effective conservancy is provided at the expense of the employer. It is further shown that doctors, nurses, teachers, and school supplies, as well as help for the sick and the poor, are given free by the Corporation, which also provides nine well-staffed and well-equipped dispensaries, seven for males and two for females, three mill crèches, and two "Baby Welcomes." Other amenities include six schools and two industrial classes for operatives and their families, large playgrounds, weekly lantern lectures, a provident fund, a superannuation fund, a co-operative society, and a house for widows.

The task of raising the status of Indian industrial labour as a whole is obviously no light one. But advance is being made, and in Bombay, where appalling congestion has existed, a vast

amount has been done and much capital has been expended on housing. The tendency of the people to crowd together is an obstacle which has to be surmounted, and it is significant that the Lancashire trade union officials, whose report has already been mentioned, realized that where dwellings have been provided, the classes for whom they are intended too often fail to take full advantage of them. The houses owned by mills are better and cheaper than those owned by private individuals. The Government of Bombay, moreover, as Mr. Hindle and his colleagues point out, have built tenement blocks for the working classes and let them at an uneconomic rent. But out of 16,000 rooms, 11,000 were unoccupied. The reasons for this are well known in India. But considering the uninformed versions that have found publicity in England it is pertinent to quote again from the Lancashire report, which says: "In spite of dirt and discomfort, the poorer people prefer to live in privately owned dwellings. They claim to have more freedom and independence. In the Government chawls and those owned by the mills there is more supervision, and tenants are not allowed to take in lodgers."

It is not necessarily poverty that causes many Indians to live under conditions that would be regarded as highly unsatisfactory in England. While I was in Bombay I was driving with a well-

known member of the Indian Medical Service, who asked me to wait outside a house while he went in for the purpose of a consultation with an Indian colleague over a sick child. When the doctor returned he remarked to me that, while the father of the child was a well-to-do man, possessing property to the value of two and a half lakhs of rupees (over £18,000), yet he and his wife and his little son were living in a single room.

It has to be borne in mind in considering the Indian industrial problem that the Indian industrial labourer as a rule is a peasant who has migrated temporarily to the city. Most of the mill operatives return to their villages at certain seasons of the year to work on their land. The uncertainty in regard to the labour supply resulting from this fact increases the difficulties of the employers, and the custom helps to explain why Indian mill labour is inefficient compared with English labour.

No one could contend for a moment that the condition of the Indian industrial classes as a whole is ideal, for that would obviously be untrue. At the same time there is no foundation for the assertion that neither Government nor employers have concerned themselves seriously with the problem of improving the lot of the workers.

The Government of India's record in regard to labour legislation compares favourably with that

of many other countries. India has taken an active part in the International Labour Organization associated with the League of Nations, and unfeigned satisfaction was expressed when an eminent Indian, Sir Atul Chatterjee, was elected to preside over the International Labour Conference in Geneva. Legislation for the benefit of the industrial classes includes a Factories Act which limits the hours of labour to sixty per week, provides for a compulsory weekly holiday, and fixes a minimum age for the employment of children at twelve. A Workmen's Compensation Act is on the Statute Book, a Trades Union Act has been passed which came into operation in 1927, and legislation has also been passed for the settlement of labour disputes. It is significant that the Bombay mill-owners attribute the present depressed condition of their industry largely to Japanese competition, the strength of which lies in the inferior conditions imposed upon labourers in that country.

It is unquestionable that the employment of British capital under European direction has helped materially to strengthen the economic position of India, and it has provided a valuable means of mitigating the evils arising from the failure of the crops. The jute industry in Bengal owes its inception and success entirely to British enterprise, and the same may be said of the tea

gardens of Assam and of other tea-growing areas. Indians, however, are showing an increasing tendency to embark in industrial ventures, though their most notable activities have been confined to the Bombay Presidency, or have, as in the case of the great Tata Steel Company, derived their inspiration from Bombay.

Labour for the tea gardens is mainly recruited from districts in which there is a surplus population of poor people who are willing to migrate from their homes to find employment. This recruitment is carefully supervised by the authorities, and when they settle in the gardens the tea coolies are provided with land in the neighbourhood of their work, which they cultivate for themselves. Many of them when questioned declare that they are so satisfied with their environment that they do not propose to return to their old homes. The Royal Commission on Agriculture in India paid a high tribute to the planting industry, which owes its creation to British enterprise. The Commission in their Report stated that, in addition to the economic benefits the plantations conferred on the community generally by the introduction of valuable crops, their presence is in many ways, direct and indirect, of great service to the population in their vicinity. "Communications," they added, "are improved, local agricultural practice is favourably

influenced by a good example, the wages paid to labour raise the general standard of living in the district, and, in many instances, education and medical faculties are provided . . . the benefit which India owes to the planting community has not, we think, been adequately realized by the general public."

EDUCATION AND THE MASSES

THE question of educating the Indian masses is a matter of profound moment. But those critics of Government who, with no first-hand knowledge of India, imagine the task of providing primary education for the population at large to be a simple one, would do well to consider a few elementary facts. The area of British India is 1,094,000 square miles, and its population is considerably more than double that of the United States. Of this great mass of humanity 222,000,000 are country people, residing in some 499,000 villages. Putting aside differences of language, religion, and caste, it is evident that the provision even of elementary education for so vast a number of human beings demands huge expenditure, and that the training of an army of teachers is a formidable undertaking.

It was recently declared with emphasis that "The popular cry in India to-day is for elementary education, and so far as the Government of India is concerned, it is like one crying in the wilderness." The truth is that there has never been a "popular cry" for education, and that is why compulsion is being tried in a number of Provinces with the object of ensuring that

children shall not be removed from school at a tender age before they have imbibed any knowledge that is likely to be of the slightest value to them in later life. Not is the Government of India responsible for education, which is one of the subjects entrusted to Indian Ministers in the various Provinces. But though there has been no popular cry for elementary education, an incessant demand has been forthcoming from the "intelligentsia" for universities, and as a result great numbers of graduates, who find it difficult to obtain the kind of employment which suits their inclinations, are being turned out with machine-like regularity. In this respect the educational system has been top-heavy, but there is gratifying evidence of a great improvement to-day in regard to children of both sexes. The latest report on the Moral and Material Progress of India states that the total number of girls receiving education in recognized institutions is nearly 2,000,000, and that there are now 12,000,000 pupils under instruction in India.

The Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, in his evidence before the Linlithgow Commission, stated that he hoped that in the course of the next five years 80 per cent. of the children of school-going age in that Province would be receiving instruction. Schools for adults have, moreover, been established in the

Punjab, and are being attended by a substantial number of grown-up people. The educational outlook in India is therefore highly encouraging, though many difficulties have yet to be overcome.

CHILD MARRIAGE AND PHYSICAL WELFARE

The physical inefficiency of so many of the Indian masses constitutes a problem which must prove difficult of solution, so long as existing social and religious customs continue to prevail. In relation to this question, Lieut.-Colonel Graham, I.M.S., Public Health Commissioner with the Government of India, gave important evidence before the Linlithgow Commission. It was doubtful, he said, whether any Government in the world could show a better record of State aid in regard to medical education and medical relief than the Government of India. "In the matter of public health, however," he added, "we are at once up against the rooted prejudices of a highly conservative congeries of people in whom, in many instances, religious practices enter largely into domestic affairs, especially in regard to illness and nutrition. It will, therefore, be readily understood why the deliberate policy of the Government in public health matters should have been to lead rather than to compel, and to

propagate with a view to creating in time a public health conscience."

The custom of child marriage has had effects on the great Hindu community which it would be difficult to exaggerate. In a debate in the Legislative Assembly a few years ago I heard a high-caste Hindu maintain that the raising of the age of consent in regard to child wives would disintegrate Hindu society. On the other hand, in the paper which he edits, Mr. Gandhi quoted with approval from a striking article in another journal, which declared that child marriage was sapping the vitality of thousands of the most promising boys and girls; it was bringing into existence thousands of weaklings who were born of immature parents; it was a fruitful source of the appalling child mortality that prevailed in Hindu society. In her book, *Mother India*, Miss Katherine Mayo, an American writer, has dealt with the question with a frankness that has attracted to Indian social problems an attention never before accorded to them. It is highly gratifying to know that in 1929 an enlightened reformer, Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarada, with the support of the Government of India, succeeded in carrying through the Legislature a Child Marriage Bill, which provides that the age of marriage shall be not less than fourteen and the age of consent not less than sixteen. This measure,

which received the assent of the Viceroy, has since been utilized for anti-Government propaganda.

The economic prosperity of India and the happiness of many millions of the people of that great country are involved in these problems, and it may be hoped that henceforward more strenuous and effective efforts will be made to remedy evils which hitherto have proved a formidable bar to India's progress.

INDIA'S STEADY ADVANCE

THE facts which have been set out in the present brief review should be sufficient to satisfy any unbiased mind that, whatever its shortcomings may have been, British administration has honestly been directed to the furtherance of the welfare of India. Those who seek to combat this proposition almost invariably adduce in support of their case statements made or alleged to have been made in years long gone by, many of which were challenged at the time and are now thoroughly discredited. The critics of British rule in India forget, or at all events omit to state, that the condition of the people has undergone a marvellous change in the past half-century; that *even in England* the Education Act of 1870 was passed within the memory of many who are alive among us to-day, and that it is only in comparatively recent years that the importance of sanitary and public health questions have been brought home to the public mind in this country.

The difficulties of effecting social reforms in England have been formidable enough; in India they are ten times greater, and in India powerful associations of private citizens, which in England

have played so great a part in the moral and material welfare of the community, are unhappily few. But India is advancing; habits of thrift are beginning to make their way; there are over 2,600,000 small depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank, with some £20,000,000 standing to their credit. The increase both in deposits and depositors has been rapid in recent years, and is a tribute to the security felt in the Government. In time the practice of hoarding the precious metals may cease, and when that day comes an enormous advance in the development of India's great natural resources should be witnessed. It is difficult to reconcile the theory that India is poor with the colossal absorption of gold and silver which has been proceeding for many generations, and has amounted in the past few years to the equivalent of hundreds of millions of pounds. Lord Irwin, in referring to this question recently, pointed out that in the last thirty years alone India imported £400,000,000 in gold and £350,000,000 in silver, and to that enormous sum has to be added the huge stores of the precious metals previously in the country. If only a small proportion of the wealth represented by the hoards of the precious metals had been devoted to productive purposes, a marvellous stimulus might have been given to India's economic prosperity.

A SOUND FINANCIAL POSITION

The position of India in regard to public debt is one which England might well envy. The Report of the Controller of the Currency in India for 1928-29 shows that at March 31, 1929, the total interest-bearing obligations of the Government amounted to Rs. 1,074 crores, or, in round figures, £805,000,000, of which over Rs. 872 crores, or £654,000,000, were represented by productive assets, principally railways. Taking into account the cash, bullion, and securities held on Treasury account, the total obligations not covered by assets amounted only to some Rs. 170 crores, or £128,000,000. These figures may be commended to the attention of anyone who imagines that India is burdened with public debt. They provide most illuminating proof of the care with which India's finances have been administered. Sir Basil Blackett, when Finance Member of the Government of India, pointed out that individual Indian investors had been buying India stocks in London, and his comment on this process was that it might legitimately be regarded as the first step towards India's becoming a creditor nation in the ordinary sense of that phrase.

AGITATION AND DISORDER

INDIA has no greater enemies to-day than the men who endeavour to palliate rioting and outrage by laying the blame at the door of the Government. The orgy of crime and violence which has followed in the train of the "non-co-operation" and "passive resistance" movements has been marked by almost incredible barbarities, for while the great mass of the people is law-abiding, there are in India, as elsewhere, dangerous and desperate elements which when let loose are capable of terrible excesses.

Mr. Gandhi's activities in this direction originated during the agitation against the Rowlatt Act. It is well that the intention of that measure and the events which followed its introduction should be clearly understood. During the war it was found necessary to take special precautions to suppress the activities of the revolutionary party. Since the Defence of India Act, which gave the Executive the necessary powers for this purpose, would expire six months after peace had been declared, the Government appointed a Committee to investigate the position and to recommend any legislation that seemed to be required to take its place. This Committee

was presided over by an English Judge, Sir Sidney Rowlatt, the other members being the Chief Justice of Bombay, an Indian High Court Judge from Madras, a distinguished non-official Indian lawyer, and a senior member of the Indian Civil Service. The report of this Committee, preponderatingly judicial in its character, not only disclosed the existence of a widespread revolutionary movement, but showed that poisonous propaganda had been carried on in colleges and schools. The crimes committed by the revolutionaries had been marked by appalling brutality; the criminals were so successful in terrorizing potential witnesses that it was almost impossible to obtain convictions in the courts. In Bengal alone 311 outrages had been committed between 1906 and 1918. Yet out of 1,000 persons accused of participation in these crimes, eighty-four only were convicted.

The effect of the Defence of India Act had been to keep terrorism in check; its expiration would have meant the release of some of the most dangerous of the anarchists who had been arrested under its provisions, and there was solid reason to believe that they would seize the first opportunity to resume their criminal operations. The Rowlatt Committee accordingly presented definite suggestions to the Government for meeting a grave danger to law-abiding people.

There was nothing in the Bill embodying the Committee's proposals which threatened the liberty of any good citizen. I heard the whole of the debates on that measure in the old Legislative Council, and no impartial listener could fail to be impressed by the failure of the Opposition speakers to deal with the Government's actual proposals. The speeches were confined in the main to irrelevant denunciations of the authorities, and to frantic assertions that if the Bill was passed a reign of terror would result, rendering the lives of Indians intolerable. The inauguration of an agitation throughout the country was also threatened.

MENDACITY AND REBELLION

The agitation came with a vengeance, and the storm of fury created by reckless politicians soon got beyond their control. But it was not the provisions of the Rowlatt Act that caused the rising in the Punjab in 1919. An honest exposition of those provisions would have left the people cold. Accordingly, a campaign of irresponsible mendacity, unparalleled perhaps even in India, was set on foot. The Act, the masses were assured, would enable the police to arrest any three Indians who were seen talking together; it gave the Government the right to seize the cultivator's

crops and to deprive him of his land. It was also declared that the authorities would now be able to levy taxes on the ceremonies attendant on marriages and death.

Mr. Gandhi had appeared on the scene when the Bill was still under discussion, and had announced that he would lead a passive resistance movement if it were passed. His activities included the formulation of a pledge which was widely taken by his followers. This pledge concluded with the declaration that in the event of the Bill becoming law, and until it was withdrawn, "we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as the Committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit, and we further affirm that in the struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person, or property."

So far from the agitation being conducted on peaceful lines, it soon developed into unrestrained violence, and in the Punjab into open rebellion. Mr. Gandhi now admitted that he had done wrong and announced the suspension of passive resistance. But his repentance came too late. Among other evils which the Punjab outbreak had inflicted upon India was an invasion from Afghanistan, for there is little doubt that the belief that the country was given over to disorder was a determining factor in causing the Afghan

invasion. The heavy expenditure on the Afghan War and the deaths of many British and Indian soldiers on the North-West Frontier were a part of the price paid for this insensate agitation.

A FRESH CAMPAIGN

But the lesson had not been learned. Soon after the terms of peace with Turkey were announced, Mr. Gandhi associated himself with the Mahomedan extremists who had been carrying on an intensive agitation on behalf of the Turk. The "wrongs of the Punjab," that is the measures taken to suppress the rebellion, were also put forward as constituting an intolerable grievance. This combination led to the launching of a fresh non-co-operation campaign, the principal exponents of which, as the Government of India declared, sought to dig up the foundations of British government in India, and the leaders promised their deluded followers that if only their gospel were generally accepted, India would be self-governing and independent in a year. The boycott involved in the campaign was strongly condemned by responsible Indians, and was doomed to failure. But before its failure was complete it had inflicted grave injury on many thousands of people, and especially on children and young students who had been

induced to leave Government educational institutions. Of far graver moment were the outbreaks of violence witnessed in all parts of the country. Sir Sankaran Nair, a Nationalist politician and a former Member of the Government of India, has recorded in a striking book the story of foul barbarities and unspeakable crimes which followed the inauguration of "non-co-operation" and "civil disobedience." Not only was there cruel persecution of living Indians who had incurred the displeasure of the "National Volunteers," but attempts were made to prevent the burial of the dead. In Bihar the corpse of a man was actually dragged out of its grave and thrown on the road, where its face was battered in by the exponents of "soul force."

AN ORGY OF CRIME

Those who were in India at the time will never forget the record of crime and outrage that was forthcoming almost day by day. At Chauri Chaura, in the United Provinces, "volunteers carrying Swaraj flags attacked the police-station and murdered twenty-one policemen and a small boy, the servant of one of the officers. The hapless constables were battered to death; their bodies were soaked in oil and burned. In Bombay, on the occasion of the Prince of Wales's arrival,

unoffending Europeans, Indians, and Parsis were done to death by rioters, eighty-three policemen were injured, and in the suppression of the disturbances fifty-three rioters were killed. The disorders were widespread, and Sir William Vincent, then Home Member of the Government of India, stated in the Legislative Assembly in January 1922 that in the preceding twelve months it had been necessary to call out the military no less than forty-seven times. Sir Harcourt Butler, Governor of the United Provinces, speaking at a Durbar at Lucknow in December 1921, declared that the subversive movements set on foot had failed of their purpose. "But with each successive failure," he said, "they have sown wider the seeds of racial hatred and the spirit of lawlessness. The results cry out against them and their works. Their hands are dripping with innocent blood, and cries from ruined homes and ravished women have gone up to heaven."

The most terrible of the fruits of this movement was the rising of the Moplahs of Malabar in 1921. These fanatical people, inflamed by speeches delivered by Mr. Gandhi's Mahomedan associates, rose in rebellion against the Government and committed dreadful atrocities on their Hindu neighbours. Mrs. Besant, who visited the camps in which thousands of the victims had found

refuge, wrote at the time: "The misery is beyond description. Girl wives, pretty and sweet, with eyes half blind with weeping, distraught with terror; women who have seen their husbands hacked to pieces before their eyes . . . men who have lost all, hopeless, crushed, and desperate—I have walked among thousands of them in the refugee camps. . . . Mr. Gandhi would have hostilities suspended, so that the Moplahs may sweep down on the refugee camps and finish their work?"

The Mahatma has repeatedly imposed upon himself a period of fasting as a penance for the disorders for which he has been responsible in recent years. But his penitence has never led him to abandon a course of conduct which, as he must have known full well, would inevitably cause fresh outbreaks and renewed bloodshed. The early months of 1930 have witnessed grave disorders in the Bombay Presidency, due directly to his "non-violent" incitements; riots in Calcutta, Madras, Delhi, Karachi, and Peshawar, and the necessity for proclaiming Martial Law in Sholapur. The outrages committed by armed men at Chittagong, involving cold-blooded murders, led Mr. Gandhi to declare that the news "made sad reading," but, he characteristically added, "there could be no suspension of the fight."

One of the gravest developments in the cam-

paign thus set on foot has been the attempt to stir up the warlike tribes of the North-West Frontier, which, if successful, would have had dire results for India. Unrest was actually caused as far afield as Waziristan, the method adopted by the mischief-makers being the dissemination of false reports regarding the disturbances at Peshawar and the political situation in India generally. The preachings of Mr. Gandhi and his Congress associates have, indeed, created a widespread atmosphere of lawlessness which is fraught with serious danger to India. They have brought about a revival of the activities of anarchist conspirators; they have given a stimulus to the sinister efforts of revolutionary Communists; they have fanned the flames of racial and religious animosities.

The disturbances have been welcomed by the criminal classes, who are invariably attracted by the prospect of loot. But they have brought nothing save trouble to the peaceful citizen, who desires to carry on his daily work unmolested; and they have imposed a terrible strain upon the Indian police, whose loyalty, courage, and devotion to duty are deserving of the highest praise.

The supreme need of India to-day is peace, so that constructive work may be carried on for the benefit of her great population. It is, therefore, the solemn duty of all who desire her advance-

ment to abstain from offering encouragement, direct or indirect, to any agitation which may tend to cause a recurrence of the terrible events that have been here described. This warning is not given light-heartedly, nor with a wish to deprecate or discredit any movement conducted on legitimate and constitutional lines; it is inspired by a sincere desire for the prosperity and progress of India and the Indian people.

The laborious work of the Simon Commission and the coming meeting in London in the autumn of 1930 of a representative Round-Table Conference to consider the future governance of India are derided by Indian irreconcilables. But if the recommendations of the Commission and the deliberations of the Conference should result in the formulation of sound and progressive proposals, they will be welcomed by all who take a sane and sympathetic interest in India's welfare.

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